



# Aurora and the Helpful Dragon

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# Aurora and the Helpful Dragon

By Barbara Bazaldua

Illustrated by Studio IBOIX and Gabriella Matta

Random House  New York

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One fine summer morning, Princess Aurora and Prince Phillip went for a ride through the forest. As they rounded a corner, Aurora heard a strange noise. Suddenly, a small dragon popped out from behind a tree and scampered toward her.







"Oh, he's so cute!" Aurora exclaimed as she dismounted.  
"Grrgrrgrr?" the dragon gurgled, climbing into Aurora's lap.  
Prince Phillip looked worried. "Dragons can be dangerous!" he said.  
"This little fellow wouldn't hurt a fly!" Aurora smiled. "Let's take him home. I'm going to name him Crackle."



When Phillip and Aurora returned home, they found the three fairies hanging royal banners in the courtyard. King Stefan and the Queen would be arriving that evening for a ball.

"Come, my dear, let's practice dancing!" Phillip said to Aurora.





Just then, the fairies discovered Crackle. Flora and Fauna both gasped. "Dragons can be dangerous!"

"Nonsense, you two. I think he's sweet," Merryweather said.

Crackle gave a happy gurgle as he noticed a kitten purring in a basket of yarn.





Crackle wanted to purr, too! He scrunched up his mouth and closed his eyes. “Purrgrrr, purrgrrr!”

Clouds of thick smoke began to pour from his nose and mouth.

“Achoo! Achooooie! Ah-ah-ah-CHOO!” The fairies sneezed so hard they flew backward.

“Please—*achoo!*—stop trying to be a kitten!” Fauna wheezed.

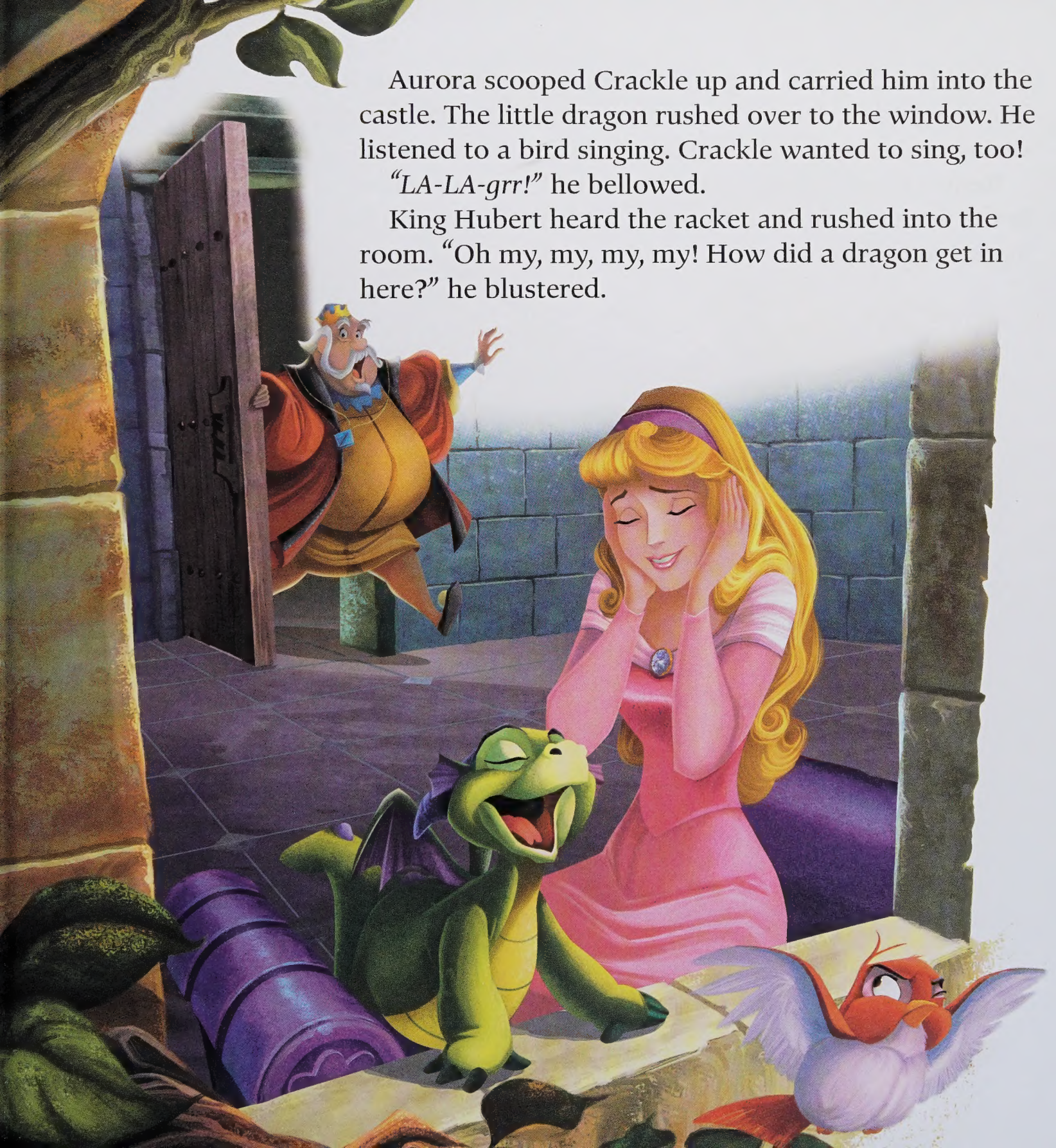




Aurora scooped Crackle up and carried him into the castle. The little dragon rushed over to the window. He listened to a bird singing. Crackle wanted to sing, too!

*"LA-LA-grrr!"* he bellowed.

King Hubert heard the racket and rushed into the room. "Oh my, my, my, my! How did a dragon get in here?" he blustered.





Frightened by the king, Crackle ran out of the castle and into the garden. Aurora raced after him. She found Crackle sitting beside the castle fountain, looking at a fish.

Before Aurora could stop him, Crackle was splashing in the water. He wanted to swim, too! The frightened fish leaped out of the way.







“Crackle, you’re not a fish!” Aurora exclaimed. “You’re not a kitten or a bird, either. You are a dragon!”

Tears rolled down Crackle’s face. “Grrgrrgrr,” he sobbed.

Suddenly, Aurora understood. “Do you think no one will like you because you’re a dragon?” she asked.

Crackle nodded sadly.









Aurora wiped away Crackle's tears and took him back into the castle. "You can't change the fact that you're a dragon," she said kindly, "but you don't have to be a dangerous dragon. You can be a brave, helpful dragon."

Just then, flashes of lightning blazed through the sky. A storm had blown in! Everyone gathered in the grand hallway to watch.

"I'm afraid King Stefan and the Queen might lose their way on the road," Prince Phillip said, concerned.



Suddenly, Aurora's eyes lit up. "Crackle! Here's your chance to be brave and helpful. Fly to the top of the highest castle tower and blow the largest, brightest flames you can. When King Stefan and the Queen see your flames, they will be able to safely find their way to the castle!"







*"Grrgrrrrr!"* Crackle exclaimed excitedly. He quickly soared to the topmost tower. He took a deep breath, and *WHOOOSH!* A gigantic ball of fire erupted from his mouth. Gold and red light flashed into the air. Again and again, Crackle blew his flames into the dark, stormy sky.



Soon after, King Stefan and the Queen arrived at the castle. King Hubert, Phillip, and Aurora rushed to greet them.

"That tower light saved us!" King Stefan exclaimed. "I need one just like that!"

At that moment, Crackle flew over to join in the fun.

"Well, there he is! Our new tower light!" King Hubert said with a laugh.

"A dragon?" King Stefan asked. "But dragons are danger—"

"Not Crackle," Aurora interrupted. "He's a brave and helpful dragon!"



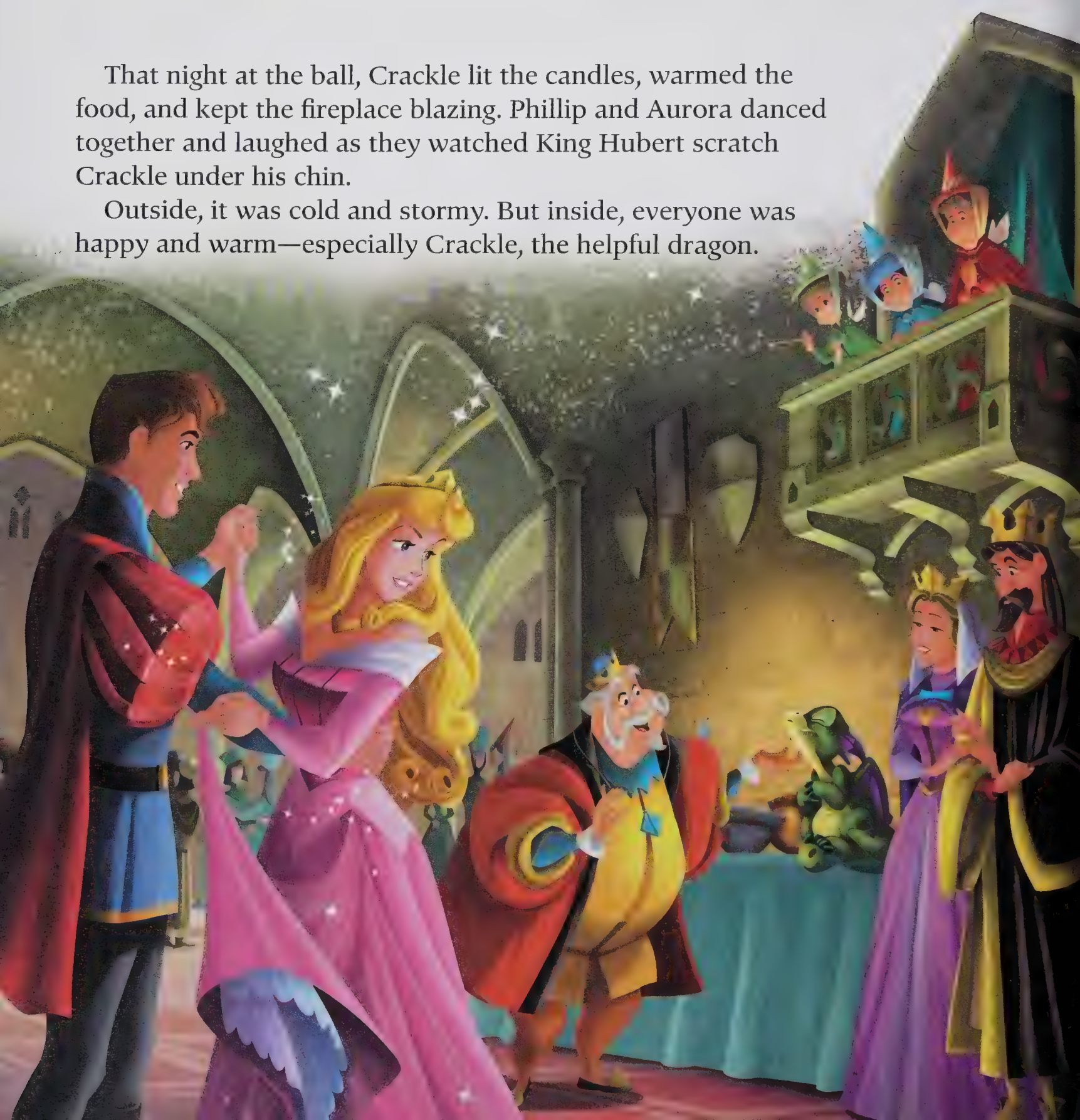






That night at the ball, Crackle lit the candles, warmed the food, and kept the fireplace blazing. Phillip and Aurora danced together and laughed as they watched King Hubert scratch Crackle under his chin.

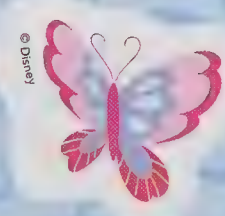
Outside, it was cold and stormy. But inside, everyone was happy and warm—especially Crackle, the helpful dragon.































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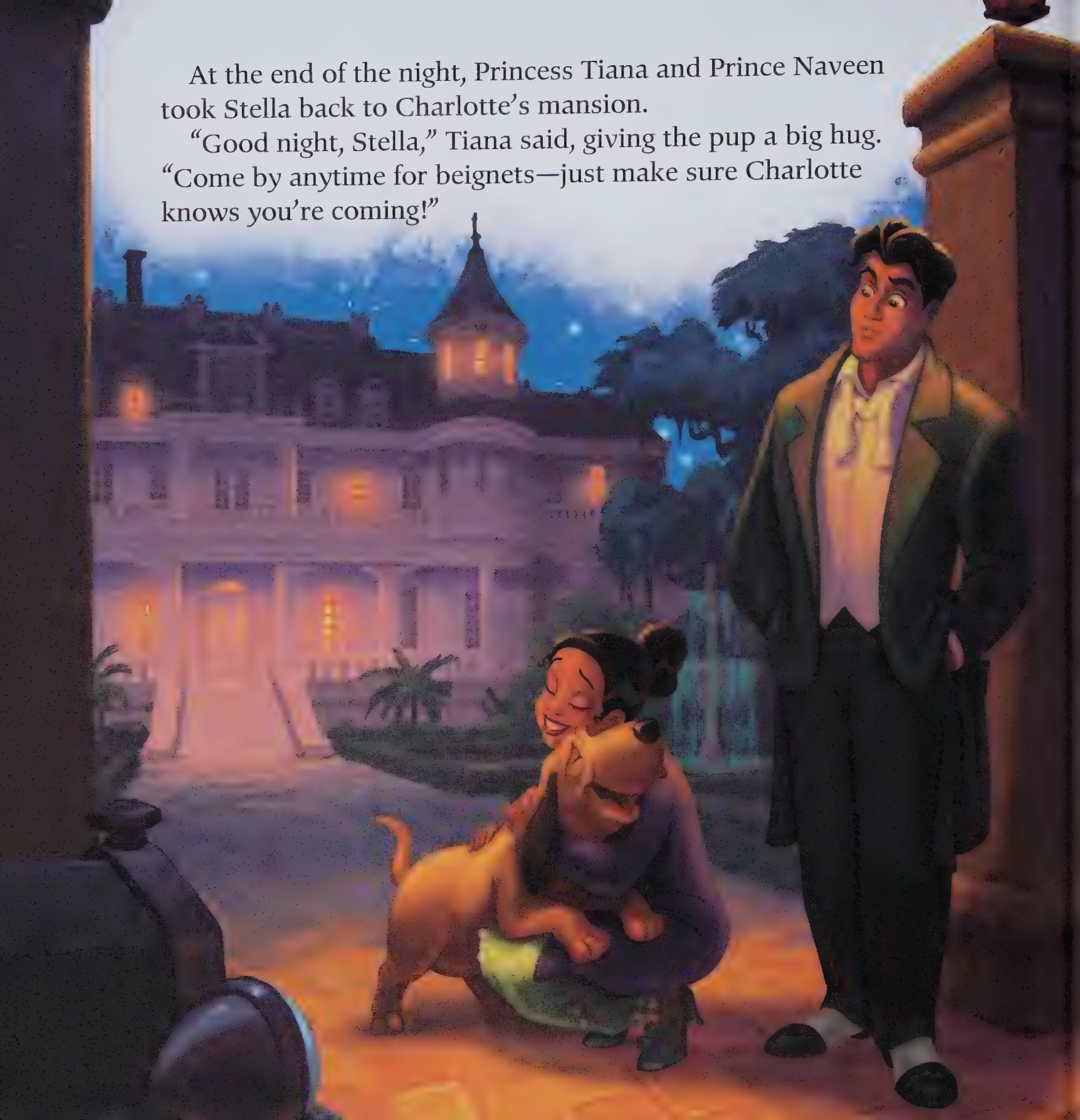






At the end of the night, Princess Tiana and Prince Naveen took Stella back to Charlotte's mansion.

"Good night, Stella," Tiana said, giving the pup a big hug. "Come by anytime for beignets—just make sure Charlotte knows you're coming!"











# Tiana and Her Furry Friend

By Natalie Amanda Leece  
Illustrated by STUDIO IBOIX and Walt Sturrock

Random House  New York

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**J**t was a warm afternoon in New Orleans. Big Daddy was in the mood for some good food and good times with friends.

"Charlotte, honey!" he called out to his daughter. "Let's go to Tiana's Palace for supper tonight!"

Charlotte clapped her hands. "Oh, Daddy, that sounds perfect!"











Princess Tiana greeted her friends warmly. Charlotte was so busy chatting that she didn't notice her pet dog, Stella, trotting away from the car! No one knew that Stella had been asleep in the backseat. Now the hound was following the delicious smells right into Tiana's restaurant!





Stella's nose led her to the kitchen, where she found many cooks preparing wonderful meals. A kind waiter tossed Stella a yummy bone. Stella spent a happy evening in the kitchen being well fed and petted.



Suddenly, an enormous alligator entered the kitchen! It was Louis, coming in for his dinner after his nightly performance at Tiana's.

Stella was frightened. She had never seen an alligator before—and Louis's big teeth looked scary!

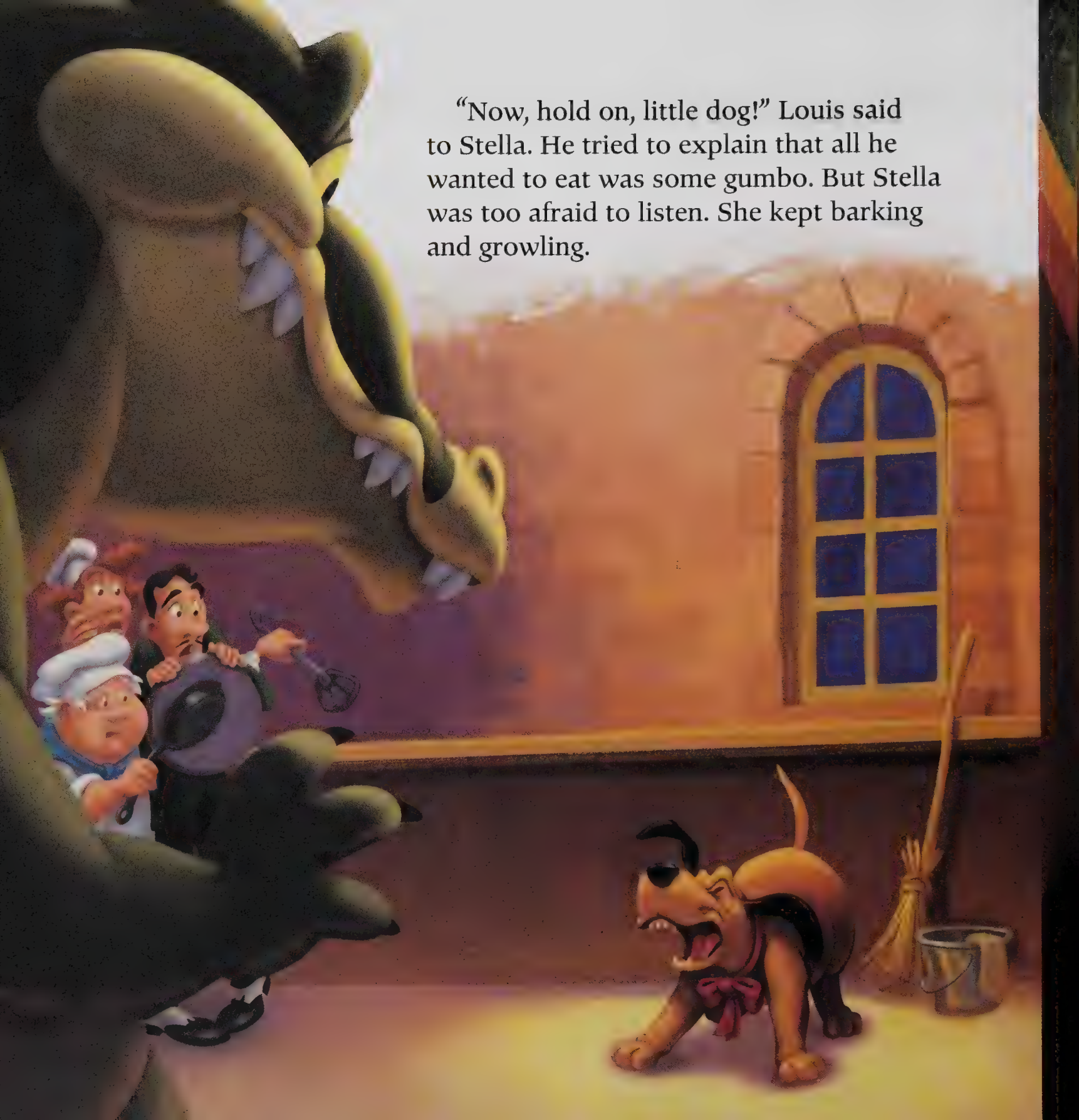








"Now, hold on, little dog!" Louis said to Stella. He tried to explain that all he wanted to eat was some gumbo. But Stella was too afraid to listen. She kept barking and growling.





Princess Tiana and Prince Naveen heard the noise and ran to the kitchen.

“Charlotte and Big Daddy already went home, but that sounds a lot like Stella,” said Tiana as she opened the door.



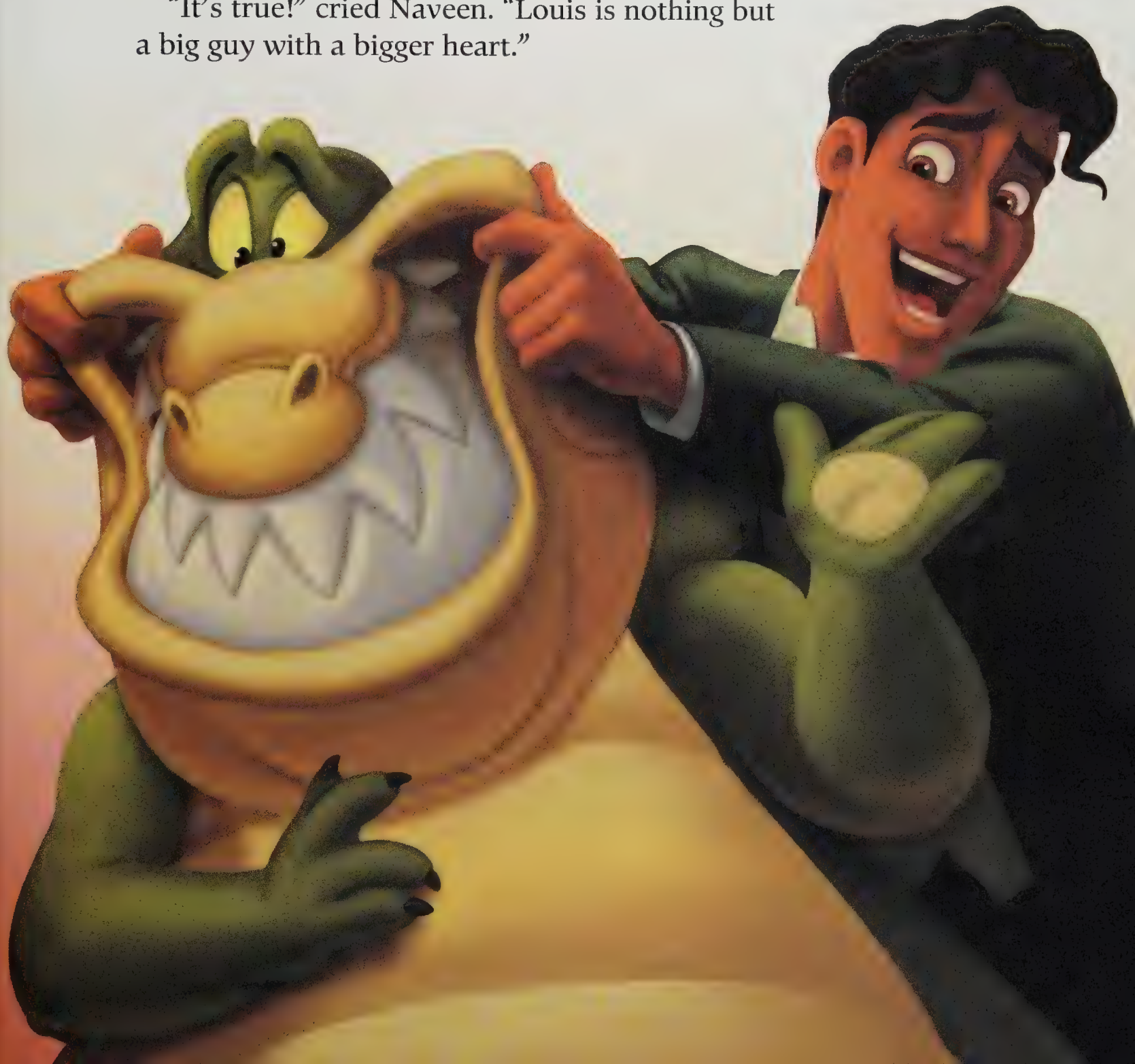






"Stella, you *are* here!" Tiana said as she petted her furry friend.  
"Don't worry. That's just Louis. He wouldn't hurt anybody."

"It's true!" cried Naveen. "Louis is nothing but  
a big guy with a bigger heart."









A full-page illustration from a Disney book. On the left, Princess Tiana stands in a green, shimmering, sleeveless gown with a large bow at the waist. She has her hair in a bun and is smiling, with her hand near her face. In the foreground, Louis, a brown alligator wearing a red bow tie, looks up at a bowl of food. The bowl is filled with chicken and sits on a dark wooden stand. The background is a soft, warm glow.

“Go ahead, Stella,” Princess Tiana said. “Walk right over to Louis. He won’t bite.”

Stella stopped barking. Slowly, with Tiana by her side, she walked toward Louis.

Stella sniffed Louis. Then she saw a bowl of chicken. Her tail wagged happily as she forgot all about being scared and headed for the food. Tiana laughed. Everything was going to be fine.







Later, Tiana gave Stella some of her famous beignets. Louis played his trumpet and Naveen played the ukulele as a special late-night treat for the restaurant's staff.





At the end of the night, Princess Tiana and Prince Naveen took Stella back to Charlotte's mansion.

"Good night, Stella," Tiana said, giving the pup a big hug. "Come by anytime for beignets—just make sure Charlotte knows you're coming!"











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